

August 23, 2004

[Fire Chief, Fire Commission Chairperson, and EMS Director of Operations]
Address
Address

Dear [Chief, Chair, Director of Operations] [Name]:

In March I sent you a letter outlining efforts to comply with FCC mandates dealing with narrow-band voice communications and other major communications projects. The purpose of this letter is to update that information.

First, Monroe County is still on track to becoming "narrow band" compliant for all fire and EMS radio frequencies by January 2006. The Fire/EMS Communications Board approved the release of the tactical frequencies for use by agencies. It is important to note that agencies can only use the frequencies for mobile and portable transmissions under the County of Monroe license. **Each agency must apply for a narrow-band license on any frequencies they intend to use on a base station unit.** At a minimum, it is recommended you license your battalion frequency and the OPS 2 frequency for base operation.

An attachment includes the names designated by the Fire/EMS Communications Board to the new narrow-band frequencies along with the frequency and digital tone identification. Any questions on these frequencies or licensing issues should be forwarded to Public Safety Communications at 428-5146. The Board will eventually recommend a scheme for identifying all other frequencies used by departments and agencies.

Second, as mentioned at the mini-summits, there are several voice paging units now on the market and under evaluation. Efforts will continue to consider features, quality, availability, and cost. There will be options available in the near future with recommendations to you for purchase.

Third, efforts continue on the two-way digital paging system. The FCC recently notified Monroe County that our application for the inbound 900 MHz frequency was denied. As you remember, this frequency is needed to effectively build the two-way system. We have been awaiting approval for over 9 months and acquisition of this frequency is linked to purchasing the appropriate equipment. Other options are now being pursued to obtain the necessary frequency to build the system.

Finally, an updated Communications Fact Sheet is attached for your reference. Any agency experiencing difficulty meeting the deadline of January 2006 should notify their coordinators and representatives to discuss and/or develop acceptable options. If you have any question as to whether your equipment is narrow band compliant contact Radio Center. Resources (grant funding) may be available to your agency through the federal Fire Act to assist in replacement of communications equipment. Additionally, information on the NYS Low Interest Loan program is available by contacting the Fire Coordinator's office at 279-4051.

Attached is a listing of the new Tactical Fire Frequencies and an updated Communications Fact Sheet.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Bowman
Director, Public Safety

- c. Fire Coordinator, Deputy Fire Coordinators
EMS Coordinator, Deputy EMS Coordinators